

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 H-02
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 ICA-20 HA-05
/090 R

DRAFTED BY IO/UNP:EESVENDSEN:MVS
APPROVED BY IO/UNP:PSBRIDGES
ARA/CAR:LKOTT (SUBS.)
ARA/PPC:RWINSTANLEY (SUBS.)
-----085588 032221Z /61
P 032045Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NASSAU PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, RQ, BF

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S PROCLAMATION ON PUERTO RICO

REF: A) NASSAU 1623
B) STATE 186242

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S PROCLAMATION OF
JULY 25 TO THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO WHICH WAS TRANS-
MITTED TO ARA POSTS BY WIRELESS FILE. YOU SHOULD PRESENT
COPY TO GOB ASAP, WITH WHATEVER FOLLOW-UP IS NECESSARY.

"TO THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO:

"TODAY MARKS PUERTO RICO'S EIGHTIETH YEAR UNDER
THE AMERICAN FLAG, AND THE TWENTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FOUNDING OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, A
FORM OF GOVERNMENT FREELY AND DEMOCRATICALLY ADOPTED BY
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THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO. SINCE 1898 AND AS AMERICAN
CITIZENS SINCE 1917, YOU HAVE MADE A RICH CONTRIBUTION
TO THE LIFE OF THE UNITED STATES, WHILE PRESERVING YOUR
OWN UNIQUE CULTURE AND TRADITIONS WITHIN THE BROADER
COMMUNITY.

"AS YOU COMMEMORATE THIS ANNIVERSARY, I WOULD LIKE

TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE UNITED STATES REMAINS FULLY COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO. PRESIDENT EISENHOWER MADE THAT COMMITMENT IN 1953, AND THIS HAS BEEN THE POSITION OF ALL U.S. ADMINISTRATIONS SINCE THAT TIME. WE CONTINUE TO REGARD IT AS THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE IN DECIDING PUERTO RICO'S FUTURE.

"MY ADMINISTRATION WILL RESPECT THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO AND YOUR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. WHATEVER DECISION THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO MAY WISH TO TAKE -- STATEHOOD, INDEPENDENCE, COMMONWEALTH STATUS OR MUTUALLY-AGREED MODIFICATIONS IN THAT STATUS -- IT WILL BE YOURS, REACHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR OWN TRADITIONS, DEMOCRATICALLY AND PEACEFULLY.

"GOVERNOR ROMERO BARCELO HAS CALLED FOR A REFERENDUM AFTER THE 1980 ELECTIONS IN PUERTO RICO TO DECIDE PUERTO RICO'S FUTURE STATUS. SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO DECIDE TO HOLD A REFERENDUM, I WILL SUPPORT, AND URGE THE CONGRESS TO SUPPORT, WHATEVER DECISION THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO REACH.

"THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES ARE PROUD OF OUR CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH PUERTO RICO OVER THE LAST 80 YEARS. WE KNOW THAT WE CAN BEST HONOR
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OUR FRIENDSHIP, AND OUR OWN DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, BY RESPECTING YOUR FREE CHOICE ABOUT YOUR OWN FUTURE. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, DECLARATION, SELFDETERMINATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE196260
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EESVENDSEN:MVS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780319-0395
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808101/aaaadgtw.tel
Line Count: 96
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9cca8457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 NASSAU 1623
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1543933
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT'S PROCLAMATION ON PUERTO RICO
TAGS: PGOV, RQ, BF, US, (CARTER, JIMMY)
To: NASSAU
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9cca8457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014